

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1562

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### As Passed House:

March 7, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to continuing the work of the Washington food policy forum.

**Brief Description:** Continuing the work of the Washington food policy forum.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Stonier, Orwall, Senn, Slatter, Peterson, Lovick, Farrell, Santos, Ryu, McBride, Ortiz-Self, Hudgins, Pollet, Riccelli, Macri, Pike, Stanford, Doglio, Fitzgibbon, Bergquist, Tharinger, Sawyer, Ormsby, Dolan, Cody and Fey).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/2/17, 2/9/17, 2/16/17 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/23/17, 2/24/17 [DP2S(w/o sub AGNR)].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/7/17, 63-34.

### Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Establishes a food policy forum as a public-private partnership to promote specified goals related to Washington's food system, including increased consumption of Washington-grown food, increased state purchasing of local food products for schools, increased retention of an adequate number of farmers for small scale farms, and improved communication between local food policy entities and state agencies.
- Directs the food policy forum to submit recommendations to the Legislature no later than October 31, 2018.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Kretz, Lytton, Pettigrew, Robinson, Springer and Stanford.

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*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.*

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Orcutt, Schmick and J. Walsh.

**Staff:** Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Cody, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hudgins, Jinkins, Kagi, Lytton, Pettigrew, Pollet, Sawyer, Senn, Springer, Stanford, Sullivan and Tharinger.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stokesbary, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Caldier, Condotta, Haler, Harris, Nealey, Schmick, Taylor, Vick, Volz and Wilcox.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Manweller.

**Staff:** Dan Jones (786-7118).

### **Background:**

#### The Washington Food Policy Forum.

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission) convened a food policy forum in response to direction and funding in the 2016 Supplemental Operating Budget. This forum followed a previous food system roundtable established by Executive Order No. 10-02.

The forum is composed of members appointed by the Director of the Commission, as well as four members from the Legislature.

The Commission must report the food policy forum's recommendations to the Legislature by October 31, 2017.

### **Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:**

The Washington food policy forum is established as a public-private partnership, and must develop recommendations to promote the following food system goals:

- to increase direct marketing sales and consumption of Washington-grown food;
- to expand and promote programs that bring healthy Washington-grown foods to Washington residents;
- to examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of farmers for small scale farms; and
- to reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state.

The food policy forum's recommendations must consider, at a minimum, how the following can help achieve the goals of the forum:

- increased collaboration between different levels of government;
- innovative public-private partnerships;
- improvements to state and federal laws relevant to the small acreage farming interactions with the food system and food security in the state;
- improvements in state or federal program implementation relevant to the small acreage farming interactions with the food system and food security in the state;
- identification of additional public and private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations; and
- defining and describing the variety of agriculture in the state utilizing farm acreage, crop type, and defining what the term "local" means in the context of food production and distribution.

The Director of the Commission and the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) share equally the responsibility for appointing the members of the forum, with a goal of ensuring a diversity of knowledge, experience, and perspectives. The directors must agree on all appointments. Four members of the Legislature may also serve on the forum, one from each of the two largest caucuses in the House of Representatives and Senate.

The members of the forum will not receive compensation, but may be reimbursed for their travel expenses.

The Commission and the WSDA must provide staff for the forum. The Commission and the WSDA are also responsible for transmitting the forum's recommendations to the Legislature. The forum's recommendations must be submitted to the Legislature by October 31, 2018.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Agriculture & Natural Resources):**

(In support) The Washington food policy forum brings together different parties on behalf of one Washington. It is important both to take care of people and to help businesses thrive. There is a need to continue the discussion started in the previous food policy roundtable and food policy forum. Without this bill, there would be no avenue for these important conversations surrounding food. Existing programs at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as the private sector, could benefit from increased cooperation. The food policy forum could identify burdensome regulations. The timing of the food policy forum under the bill is good because the federal Farm Bill, which funds food and nutrition programs, will be coming up for reauthorization soon. The forum could identify important food-related issues that could then be passed on to Washington's congressional delegation for possible inclusion in the Farm Bill. The food policy forum proposed in the bill would take the forum in a

different, better direction than the roundtable. The food policy forum would provide a venue where each sector of agriculture could have its voice be heard.

(Opposed) It is important that everyone have access to healthy food. The roundtable has been more divisive than unifying. The roundtable's report was concerning to certain members of the agricultural community, by addressing issues like genetically modified organisms, pesticides, and social justice.

(Other) Washington has a complex agricultural community. There are already many programs in place. There are several critical flaws in the bill. It insinuates that agriculture contributes to obesity, which is not true. It claims that food insecurity in Washington would be improved by local food production. But the United States is a trade-dependent nation. It does not make sense to focus on local food production when Washington can do what Washington does best, with crops like apples and potatoes. It makes sense to focus on the farmer, not the acreage. The roundtable did not have a farmer's opinion on it, so it is important to be cautious about relying on the roundtable's findings or recommendations. The bill does not address how to actually fix obesity; studies show that the main drivers of obesity are economic and cultural. It is important to feed people, but it's also important to protect everybody's interests. There are other forums in place that address the goals identified in this bill, and tax dollars are already being devoted to these goals. It makes more sense to put efforts into existing programs that are already working. The food policy forum may not get all the necessary interests to the table. The current bill reads favorably to the roundtable, which is a source of concern.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):**

(In support) Good progress is being made on the policy of the bill in discussions with the prime sponsor and stakeholders. Costs in the fiscal note are mainly associated with staff time, and could probably be decreased.

(Opposed) The original bill led to some conflict, but with the help of the prime sponsor, the bill is moving in a positive direction. The bill has the potential to bring attention to issues related to hunger, direct marketing, and farmers selling to schools and farmers markets. The fiscal note could likely be decreased so as not to be a detriment to the bill's progress.

**Persons Testifying (Agriculture & Natural Resources):** (In support) Representative Gregerson, prime sponsor; and Ron Schultz, Washington State Conservation Commission.

(Opposed) Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau.

(Other) Madilynne Clark, Washington Policy Center.

**Persons Testifying (Appropriations):** (In support) Ron Shultz, Washington State Conservation Commission.

(Opposed) Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Agriculture & Natural Resources):** None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.**