
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SB 5793

Brief Description: Concerning an assessment on cattle.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the per head assessment on the sales of all Washington cattle.
- Requires the Washington State Beef Commission to report to the Legislature by January 1 of each year on the amount of funds collected by the Beef Commission during the preceding year, the amount spent, and the purpose for which the funds were used.

Hearing Date: 3/16/17

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington State Beef Commission.

The Washington State Beef Commission (Beef Commission) is a nine-member board, eight of whom are appointed by the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (Director), with the Director acting as the ninth member. The commissioners are drawn from the different segments of Washington's beef industry, including beef producers, dairy beef producers, livestock sales yard operators, and meat packers. Each commissioner serves a three-year term. The purpose of the Beef Commission is to fund beef promotion, research, and consumer education activities supporting Washington's beef industry.

Washington State Department of Agriculture—Livestock Inspection Program.

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 Livestock Inspection Program records brands, licenses feedlots and public livestock markets, and conducts surveillance and inspection of livestock at time of sale and upon out-of-state movement. Cattle and horses are inspected for permanent identification such as brands and ownership documents at public livestock markets; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) slaughter plants; licensed, certified feedlots; at change of ownership; and prior to leaving the state. The program is funded by fees paid by the livestock industry and does not receive general fund dollars.

Washington State Beef Commission Fee—\$1.

An assessment of \$1 per head of cattle is levied on the sale of all Washington cattle, to be paid by the seller at the time of sale. The fee is collected by the livestock services division of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and is transmitted to the Washington State Beef Commission.

National Beef Promotion and Research Program Fee—\$0.50.

In addition to the \$1 per head fee that supports the Beef Commission, the Beef Commission also has the authority to collect a \$0.50 per head fee for the purpose of providing funds for a national beef promotion and research program.

The Green Tag.

Upon the request of a licensed milk producer, the WSDA must issue an official individual identification tag, known as a green tag, to be placed by the producer before the first point of sale on bull calves and infertile female calves that are less than 30 days old. Transactions of such calves are exempt from the inspection requirement that applies to sales of cattle in Washington so long as certain requirements are met, including that the calf is less than 30 days old and has not previously been bought or sold, and the seller is a licensed milk producer.

Summary of Bill:

The \$1 per head assessment that funds the Washington State Beef Commission (Beef Commission) is raised to \$2 per head on all sales of Washington cattle. One dollar of the \$2 fee may not be assessed on the first sale of calves carrying a green tag.

The Beef Commission must submit a report by January 1 of each year to the Legislature that provides an accounting of the funds collected through the \$2 per head assessment. The report must include a record of the amount collected, the amount spent, and the purposes for which the funds were used.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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