

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5285

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Conducting a workforce study of employment opportunities in the agriculture, environment, outdoor recreation, and natural resources economic sectors intended to provide educators with the information needed for informing students about employment opportunities in the studied fields.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson and Palumbo).

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The agriculture, natural resources, and environment sectors are responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs in Washington State. There are 37,249 farms in the state of Washington. The state's apple industry accounts for 70 percent of the country's apple production. The state's top four commodities are apples, wheat, milk and potatoes. The state's \$49 billion food and agriculture industry employs approximately 160,000 people.

Throughout the state of Washington, more than 1,700 businesses are related to forest products. The overall direct, indirect, and induced jobs impact numbers for 2013 is 105,000 workers earning \$4.9 billion in wages. The gross business income in forestry related industries is approximately \$28 billion per year.

The environmental sector includes thousands of employees that work on issues that include, but are not limited to, clean technology, storm water mitigation, and fish culvert rehabilitation.

Summary: The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) is directed to conduct a workforce assessment for the agriculture, natural resources, outdoor recreation, and environment sectors. The study must also identify and interview a sample of major employers from the four different sectors. The study must include an assessment of:

- data from the employment security department on the current and projected levels of employment and net job vacancies;
 - data used by the workforce development councils in identifying demand for workers;
- and

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.

- data from the United States Census Bureau, including the longitudinal employer-household dynamics dataset.

The WTECB must convene and consult with a steering committee to define the scope of mid-level skilled occupations considered, validate designation of specific regions to be analyzed, and assist in the design of information collection. The WTECB may conduct the report directly or use a third party to conduct the study. The study must include recommendations that:

- identify improvements to the specificity, timeliness, and quality of information available on skilled workforce needs in the three sectors;
- identify steps necessary to extend this work to both entry and advanced level occupations in the three different sectors; and
- identify specific skills that are key to enabling workers to be productive in these sectors.

The results of the study are to be reported to the Legislature by October 15, 2018. This section expires June 30, 2019.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	96	1	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2017