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HOUSE BILL 1562

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

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

Read first time 01/23/17. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to continuing the work of the Washington food  
2 policy forum; creating new sections; and providing an expiration  
3 date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) Numerous governmental agencies, state programs, and private  
7 entities share goals and missions relating to food, nutrition,  
8 agriculture, health, education, and economic development through  
9 sustained agricultural production and improved access to nutritious  
10 foods;

11 (b) The food and agriculture industry generates forty-nine  
12 billion dollars annually, employs one hundred sixty thousand people,  
13 and contributes thirteen percent to the state's economy;

14 (c) Agriculture is a leading employer in the state, produces over  
15 three hundred different crops, and is composed of many diverse types  
16 of agricultural endeavors;

17 (d) The state of Washington continues to lose farmland every year  
18 to nonfarming uses;

19 (e) Washington is ranked with the bottom half of states for very  
20 low food security;

1 (f) According to data average for the years 2004 through 2008,  
2 nearly sixty-one percent of Washington adults are either obese or  
3 overweight;

4 (g) Obesity contributes substantially to the burden of  
5 preventable illnesses and premature death, which are estimated to  
6 cost Washington almost two billion dollars annually;

7 (h) There is a known link between food insecurity and housing  
8 insecurity;

9 (i) The state's food system is the network of people and  
10 activities connecting growing and harvesting, processing,  
11 distribution, consumption, and residue utilization, as well as  
12 associated government and nongovernment institutions, regulations,  
13 and programs;

14 (j) The current food system in the state of Washington is complex  
15 and directly affected by the activities and policies of multiple  
16 nongovernmental organizations, state agencies, and local governments,  
17 and a coordinated, systemic approach is necessary to improve the  
18 health of Washington's citizens and improve the economic viability of  
19 agriculture; and

20 (k) The work done by the regional food policy councils in the  
21 state can serve as a model for statewide efforts to bring together  
22 community, government, business, and agricultural interests to work  
23 on integrated and sustainable policy recommendations to strengthen  
24 the regional food system that works towards a thriving, inclusive,  
25 and just local and regional food system that enhances the health of  
26 people, diverse communities, economies, and environments.

27 (2) The legislature recognizes the need to understand the impacts  
28 of governmental rules and regulations on the viability of the  
29 agricultural sector and on the ability of citizens of all backgrounds  
30 to obtain sufficient, high quality foods for themselves and their  
31 families.

32 (3) The purpose of this act is to provide for the establishment  
33 of a forum temporarily established in 2016 whereby state food policy,  
34 food-related programs, and food-related issues can be examined,  
35 improved, and better integrated to accomplish the overarching public  
36 goals. It is the intent of the legislature to place the state in a  
37 favorable position to qualify for available federal funds, moneys  
38 from foundations, and other sources to fund the activities of the  
39 forum.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1) The Washington food policy forum is  
2 established as a public-private partnership. The forum must build on  
3 the work of the forum temporarily established in section 306(4),  
4 chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess. (2016 supplemental omnibus  
5 operating appropriations act). The purpose of the forum is to develop  
6 recommendations to advance the following food system goals:

7        (a) To increase production, sales, and consumption of  
8 Washington-grown foods;

9        (b) To develop and promote programs that bring healthy Washington  
10 grown foods to Washington residents, including increased state  
11 purchasing of local food products for schools, adult care programs,  
12 and other state-funded food programs;

13        (c) To review and develop programs that support providing proper  
14 nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related  
15 diseases;

16        (d) To protect the land and water resources needed for sustained  
17 local food production;

18        (e) To examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number  
19 of farmers and meet the educational needs for an adequate  
20 agricultural workforce, and to provide for the continued economic  
21 viability of local food production, processing, and distribution in  
22 the state; and

23        (f) To reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure  
24 that the health and societal benefits of a healthy Washington food  
25 system that provides access to nutritionally dense foods are shared  
26 with families at all income levels, and particularly with vulnerable  
27 children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and communities of  
28 color.

29        (2) Recommendations of the food policy forum must consider, but  
30 not be limited to, ways in which the following may help achieve each  
31 of the six goals identified under subsection (1) of this section:

32        (a) Increased collaboration and communication between local,  
33 state, and federal governments and agencies;

34        (b) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage  
35 private and public market influence, such as through institutional  
36 purchasing and contracts;

37        (c) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations relevant  
38 to the food system and food security in the state;

39        (d) Improvements in state or federal program implementation  
40 relevant to the food system and food security in the state; and

1 (e) Identification of additional federal, state, local, and  
2 private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations.

3 (3) In developing its recommendations, the food policy forum:

4 (a) Shall coordinate with the office of farmland preservation to  
5 avoid duplication of effort;

6 (b) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or  
7 informational sessions;

8 (c) May conduct research and analysis as needed within financial  
9 resources available to the forum;

10 (d) May form an advisory committee or committees to address  
11 issues identified by the forum as requiring additional study or  
12 particular expertise; and

13 (e) Shall coordinate with, and build on the processes already  
14 undertaken by the Washington state food system roundtable initiated  
15 by executive order No. 10-02.

16 (4) The director of the state conservation commission is  
17 responsible for appointing participating members of the food policy  
18 forum. In making appointments, the director of the state conservation  
19 commission must attempt to ensure a diversity of knowledge,  
20 experience, and perspectives by building on the representation  
21 established by the food system roundtable initiated by executive  
22 order No. 10-02 and from sources such as:

23 (a) State and federal government employees, including academia;

24 (b) Related nonprofit and community organizations; and

25 (c) The food industry, including food production, processing,  
26 distribution, marketing, and retail sales.

27 (5) A majority of the participating members appointed by the  
28 director of the state conservation commission must appoint an  
29 administrative chair for the forum.

30 (6) In addition to members appointed by the director of the state  
31 conservation commission, four legislators may serve on the food  
32 policy forum in an ex officio capacity. Legislative participants must  
33 be appointed as follows:

34 (a) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one  
35 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of  
36 representatives; and

37 (b) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from  
38 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

1           (7) Each member of the food policy forum shall serve without  
2 compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses as authorized  
3 in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

4           (8) Staff for the food policy forum must be provided by the state  
5 conservation commission. The state conservation commission is  
6 responsible for transmitting the recommendations of the food policy  
7 forum to the legislature. All recommendations of the food policy  
8 forum must be transmitted to the legislature by the state  
9 conservation commission, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by October  
10 31, 2018. The recommendations may include considerations for  
11 continuation of the food policy forum beyond the expiration date of  
12 this section and any changes to the mission, charge, or structure of  
13 the food policy forum should it continue beyond the expiration date.

14           (9) This section expires July 1, 2019.

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