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SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5285

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson and Palumbo)

READ FIRST TIME 02/24/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to conducting a workforce study of employment  
2 opportunities in the agriculture, environment, outdoor recreation,  
3 and natural resources economic sectors intended to provide educators  
4 with the information needed for informing students about employment  
5 opportunities in the studied fields; creating new sections; and  
6 providing an expiration date.

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

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the  
9 agriculture, environment, outdoor recreation, and natural resources  
10 economic sectors can offer rewarding career paths for students who  
11 are interested in the natural world and are excited by the idea of  
12 having a career with outdoor opportunities. Not only are these  
13 careers currently available to students, but the United States  
14 department of agriculture predicts, in their recent report on  
15 employment opportunities for college graduates in food, agriculture,  
16 renewable natural resources, outdoor recreation, and the environment,  
17 that employment opportunities in these fields are expected to  
18 increase.

19 (2) The legislature further finds that thousands of Washington  
20 students do not have access to the types of education that are  
21 necessary to guide them down the pathways leading to marketable job

1 skills and productive careers in the agriculture, environment,  
2 outdoor recreation, and natural resources economic sectors. Long-term  
3 career success in these fields require the ability to identify,  
4 apply, and integrate concepts from science, technology, engineering,  
5 and mathematics as they specifically relate to the agriculture,  
6 environment, outdoor recreation, and natural resources economic  
7 sectors and the sectors' related careers.

8 (3) The legislature further finds that students will have the  
9 information they need to consider careers in the agriculture,  
10 environment, outdoor recreation, and natural resources economic  
11 sectors if educators are provided with actual applications of how to  
12 put integrated learning into action and facilitating experiences that  
13 allow students to get outdoors and learn in real-world and community-  
14 connected environments.

15 (4) The legislature further finds that the economic opportunities  
16 available for students interested in agriculture, natural resources,  
17 outdoor recreation, or the environment can be more readily unlocked  
18 if educators are provided with information on worker demand and  
19 qualifications so that they are equipped to assist students to access  
20 the economic opportunity and help make connections between education  
21 and outdoor careers. The information needed by educators to make  
22 these connections can be accomplished through a statewide workforce  
23 study of potential jobs in these fields.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) Subject to the availability of  
25 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the workforce  
26 training and education coordinating board shall conduct a workforce  
27 assessment for the agriculture, natural resources, outdoor  
28 recreation, and environment sectors. The purpose of the study is to  
29 assess the available data on current and projected employment levels  
30 and hiring demand for skilled mid-level workers in the agriculture,  
31 environment, outdoor recreation, and natural resources economic  
32 sectors in the state. Ultimately, this information is being collected  
33 so that educators have better information available as they develop  
34 programs for informing students about potential careers.

35 (b) The study must use a broad definition for the mid-level  
36 skilled occupations included in the study and identify up to five  
37 regions of the state based on the specific workforce characteristics  
38 of agriculture, natural resources, outdoor recreation, and  
39 environment employers.

1 (2) The study required by this section must, at a minimum:  
2 (a) Include assessment of:  
3 (i) Data from the employment security department on the current  
4 and projected levels of employment and net job vacancies;  
5 (ii) Data used by workforce development councils in identifying  
6 demand for workers in their areas;  
7 (iii) Data from the United States census bureau; and  
8 (iv) Data from the United States census bureau's longitudinal  
9 employer-household dynamics dataset.  
10 (b) Identify and interview a representative sample of employers  
11 from the agriculture, environment, outdoor recreation, and natural  
12 resources economic sectors in each region to assess employers'  
13 perspective and expectations on employment and hiring of skilled mid-  
14 level workers in their industry and area. The study must also include  
15 an assessment of food and fiber processing jobs in the state.  
16 (3) In conducting any study pursuant to this section, the  
17 workforce training and education coordinating board must convene and  
18 consult with a steering committee to define the scope of mid-level  
19 skilled occupations considered, validate designation of specific  
20 regions to be analyzed, and assist in the design of information  
21 collection. The steering committee must include representatives of  
22 statewide business organizations and a delegate of the state board  
23 for community and technical colleges who will be staff.  
24 (4) In implementing this section, the workforce training and  
25 education coordinating board may complete the work directly or, at  
26 its discretion, contract the assignment, or portions of the  
27 assignment, to a third party or parties chosen by the workforce  
28 training and education coordinating board. However, the final  
29 delivered product must be reported under the workforce training and  
30 education coordinating board.  
31 (5) The report must include recommendations on current sources  
32 that provide the most representative and useful information for  
33 educators and counselors, further steps to improve the specificity,  
34 timeliness, and quality of information available on skilled workforce  
35 needs and issues in the areas of the state, and steps necessary to  
36 extend this work both into entry level and advanced level  
37 occupations, and into identification of specific skills that are key  
38 to enabling workers to be productive in this sector.

1           (6) Consistent with RCW 43.01.036, the study required by this  
2 section must be completed and the results reported to the legislature  
3 by October 15, 2018.

4           (7) This section expires June 30, 2019.

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